AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1.   [Currently Amended] A method for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said method comprising the steps of:

mapping a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term is a preferred term for searching ~~relates to~~ at least one of said plurality of machine-readable information sources;

indicating which ~~at least one~~ of said plurality of machine-readable information sources ~~that~~ each of said search terms is a preferred term for ~~term relates to~~; and

searching at least one of said indicated machine-readable information sources using ~~selected ones of said search terms~~ respective preferred search terms.

2.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

receiving said initial search ~~term~~ string from a user;

displaying, to said user, which of said plurality of machine-readable information sources each of said search terms is a preferred term for; and

providing a result of said search to said user.

3.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim 2, wherein said step of indicating comprises ~~one or more of the steps in the group of steps consisting of the step of:~~

~~indicating to said user which of said plurality of machine-readable information sources each of said search terms relates to; and~~

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~~indicating~~ _displaying,_ to said user, _a reference to_ at least one vocabulary _of terms_ each said search term is included in, ~~wherein each vocabulary relates to one of said information sources~~.

4.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim ~~3~~_2_, comprising the further step of enabling said user to select and de-select ones of said plurality of ~~machine-readable information sources whereon~~ _search terms with which_ said searching step is performed.

5.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim ~~3~~_2_, comprising the further step of enabling said user to replace ones of said plurality of search terms with user-selected replacement search terms.

6.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim ~~3~~_2_, comprising the further step of enabling said user to add further search terms to said plurality of search terms.

7.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim 1, wherein each of said plurality of search terms is selected from a vocabulary of _preferred_ search terms ~~used in a related one of~~ _for searching at least one of_ said plurality of machine-readable information sources.

8.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim 1, wherein _each of_ said plurality of search terms are selected from a meta-vocabulary comprising a list of terms included in a plurality of vocabularies _of search terms that are preferred terms for searching respective ones of said plurality of machine-readable information sources._

9.   (original)   The method of claim 1, wherein said plurality of machine-readable information sources comprise medical databases.

10.   [Currently Amended] The method of claim 1, ~~wherein said mapping step is performed once only for searching a particular search string.~~ comprising the further step of:

    searching at least one further machine-readable information source of said plurality of machine-readable information sources using one or more preferred search terms for searching said at least one further machine-readable information source;

    wherein:

    said one or more preferred search terms comprise search terms resulting from said mapping step; and

    said at least one further machine-readable information source is searched without performing a further mapping step.

11.   (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said search string comprises a plurality of terms and said step of mapping comprises the step of mapping each of said plurality of terms to a plurality of synonyms.

12.   [Currently Amended] An apparatus for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said apparatus comprising:

a communications interface for transmitting and receiving data;

a memory unit for storing data and instructions to be performed by a processing unit; and

a processing unit coupled to said communications unit and said memory unit, said processing unit programmed to:

map a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term ~~relates to~~ is a preferred term for searching at least one of said plurality of machine-readable information sources;

output an indication of which ~~at least one~~ of said plurality of machine-readable information sources ~~that~~ each of said search ~~term relates to~~ terms is a preferred term for; and

search at least one of said indicated machine-readable information sources using ~~selected ones of said~~ respective preferred search terms.

13.   [Currently Amended] The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to receive said search string from a user and to output ~~a result of said search~~ to said user, which of said plurality of machine-readable information sources each of said search terms is a preferred term for.

14. [Currently Amended] The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is programmed to ~~perform one or more instructions from the group of instructions consisting of:~~

~~indicate which of said plurality of machine-readable information sources each of said search terms relates to; and~~

~~indicate~~ output a reference to at least one vocabulary of terms each said search term is included in~~, wherein each vocabulary relates to at least one of said machine-readable information sources~~.

15. [Currently Amended] The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to enable selection and de-selection of ones of said plurality of ~~machine-readable information sources~~ search terms with which ~~whereon~~ said searching is performed.

16. (original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to enable user replacement of ones of said search terms with replacement search terms.

17. (original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is further programmed to enable further search terms to be added to said plurality of search terms.

18. [Currently Amended] The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is programmed to select each of said search terms from a vocabulary of search terms that

are preferred terms for searching at least one of ~~used in a related one of~~ said plurality of machine-readable information sources.

19.   [Currently Amended] The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said processing unit is programmed to select each of said search terms from a meta-vocabulary comprising a list of terms included in a plurality of vocabularies of search terms that are preferred terms for searching respective ones of said machine-readable information sources.

20.   (original) The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said plurality of machine-readable information sources comprise medical databases.

21.   [Currently Amended] The apparatus of claim 12, ~~wherein said initial search term is mapped once only for searching a particular search string.~~ wherein said processing unit is further programmed to search at least one further machine-readable information source of said plurality of machine-readable information sources using one or more preferred search terms for searching said at least one further machine-readable information source;

   wherein:

   said one or more preferred search terms comprise search terms resulting from said mapping; and

   said at least one further machine-readable information source is searched without performing further mapping.

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22.   (original)   The apparatus of claim 12, wherein said search string comprises a plurality of terms and said processing unit is further programmed to map each of said plurality of terms to a plurality of synonyms.

23.   [Currently Amended] A computer program product comprising a computer readable medium having a computer program recorded therein for searching a plurality of machine-readable information sources, said computer program product comprising:

computer program code for mapping a search string to a plurality of search terms, wherein each said search term is a preferred term for searching relates to at least one of said plurality of machine-readable information sources;

computer program code for outputting an indication of at least one which of said plurality of machine-readable information sources that each of said search term relates to terms is a preferred term for; and

computer program code for searching at least one of said indicated machine-readable information sources using selected ones of said respective preferred search terms.

24.   [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising:

computer program code for enabling a user to submit said initial search term string; and

computer program code for outputting, to said user, which of said plurality of machine-readable information sources each of said search terms is a preferred term for.

25.   [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said computer program code for outputting comprises one or more computer program code selected from the group of computer program code consisting of:

~~computer program code for indicating which of said plurality of machine-readable~~ ~~information sources each of said search terms relates to; and~~

computer program code for ~~indicating~~ <u>outputting a reference to</u> at least one vocabulary <u>of terms</u> each said search term is included in~~, wherein each vocabulary relates~~ ~~to at least one of said machine-readable information sources~~.

26. [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling selection and de-selection of ones of said plurality of ~~machine-readable information sources whereon~~ <u>search terms with which</u> said searching is performed.

27. [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling replacement of ones of said search terms with replacement search terms.

28. (original) The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for enabling addition of further search terms to said plurality of search terms.

29. [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for selecting each of said plurality of search terms from a vocabulary of <u>search</u> terms ~~used in a related~~ <u>that are preferred terms for searching</u> <u>at least</u> one of said plurality of machine-readable information sources.

30. [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, further comprising computer program code for selecting said plurality of search terms from a meta-vocabulary comprising a list of terms included in a plurality of vocabularies_of search terms that are preferred terms for searching respective ones of said plurality of machine-readable information sources.

31. (original) The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said plurality of machine-readable information sources comprise medical databases.

32. [Currently Amended] The computer program product of claim 23, ~~wherein said initial search term is mapped once only for searching a particular search string.~~ further comprising:

computer program code for searching at least one further machine-readable information source of said plurality of machine-readable information sources using one or more preferred search terms for searching said at least one further machine-readable information source;

wherein:

said one or more preferred search terms comprise search terms resulting from said mapping step; and

said at least one further machine-readable information source is searched without performing a further mapping step.

33. (original) The computer program product of claim 23, wherein said search string comprises a plurality of terms and said computer program code for mapping comprises computer program code for mapping each of said plurality of terms to a plurality of synonyms.

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